

**The Recycling Economic Information (REI) Project:
Developing a National Communication Strategy
Discussion Paper
2001 JTR Recycling Market Development Roundtable**

Introduction

The purpose of the *U.S. Recycling Economic Information Study* (Study) is to educate elected officials, state government offices, the investment community, and economic development officials on the size and economic impact of the recycling and reuse industries in their state and nationally. The Study, which was prepared by the National Recycling Coalition (NRC) in association with R.W.Beck, Inc., will be finalized in June, 2001. In order to effectively communicate the results of the Study, it will be necessary to develop a multi-pronged communication/outreach strategy to reach each of the various target audiences groups with the right “message(s).”

Current Situation

At the NRC Congress in September, Will Ferretti intends to hold a session to discuss/develop an outreach strategy to disseminate the results of the Study. In addition, EPA’s Municipal Industrial Solid Waste Division (MISWD), in conjunction with the JTR network, wants to develop and implement a communications plan which supports and adds value to the NRC outreach approach. As JTR members will be one of the primary disseminators of the REI information, this session was devoted to discussing effective methods to organize and present the information and the most effective communication channels to use in reaching intended target audiences.

Background

Although a number of state and multi-state recycling business studies had been conducted prior to initiation of the Study, they generally used different industry definitions and information gathering approaches and did not provide a consistent national set of statistics on the performance of recycling on a national basis. The purpose of the Study was to develop a consistent methodology that could provide a national baseline of the most useful information on different categories of recycling and reuse businesses; and to provide information and standard definitions to facilitate and improve future state and local studies of the recycling and reuse industries.

The REI project was done in two phases, following an approved methodology developed by the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC). In Phase I, NERC compiled and reported economic performance information on recycling, remanufacturing and reuse industries targeting 10 Northeastern states - Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Phase I was funded under a grant from EPA along with funding the NERC states.

In Phase II, NRC targeted the rest of the country in an effort to provide national aggregate data for 38 business categories. This phase was funded by EPA, JTR, and individual states. Data for the national report came from 9 states as well as the 10 Northeastern states who participated in the Phase I effort. Six states contracted directly with NRC and had reports prepared for their individual states (CA, FL, IL, IN, OH, NE); 3 states used the REI methodology to collect data in their states and then turned their data over to the project (MO, MN, WI). Finally, data from the states participating in the NERC/REI study was also used in preparing the national report.

The Study focuses on 26 categories of recycling, reuse and remanufacturing businesses. For each material category, the Study analyzes the direct economic impacts through data on the number of business establishments currently operating, total annual sales, total employment, total wages paid, value of goods and services provided and the annual throughput. In addition to the direct impacts, the Study will assess the indirect and induced economic impacts or “ripple effects” of recycling efforts. For the purposes of this Study, “indirect” economic impacts refer to those impacts - employment, wages, sales and value-added - that accrue from the business activities of the suppliers to, and customers of, the recycling and reuse businesses. “Induced” economic impacts refer to those value-added job, wage and sales generating impacts stemming from these businesses.

Resources

JTR Web Page on Economic Benefits

<http://www.epa.gov/jtr/econ/index.htm>

Northeast Recycling Council (NERC)

<http://www.nerc.org/projects.html#cu3>

National Recycling Coalition (NRC)

<http://www.nrc-recycle.org/Programs/financing/rei.htm>

Brainstorming Summary

During the session at the 2001 Jobs Through Recycling (JTR) Roundtable participants brainstormed ideas for a national communications strategy for the Recycling Economic Information (REI) project. For most topics, the group prioritized the ideas by dividing them into two categories: primary and secondary. The topics addressed were:

- Overall goals of the strategy
- Target audiences
- Information disseminators
- Key messages
- Potential activities and products
- Upcoming venues
- Potential measures of success
- Potential next steps

I. Overall Goals for Behavior Changes/Influence

Primary

- Elevate credibility and respect for the recycling industry.
- Increase resources allocated to the recycling industry, including funding from legislators to state agencies and investment from public and private sources into recycling businesses.
- Raise public awareness about recycling, combating complacency among the public and industry.
- Increase services provided to recycling businesses.

Secondary

- Increase recycling rates.
- Increase attention from economic development agencies and encourage them to earmark resources for recycling market development.
- Safeguard existing resources for recycling.
- Increase the financial options available to recycling businesses.
- Educate established businesses about the benefits of recycling.
- Spur interest in recycling among entrepreneurs.
- Educate recyclers about their importance to the economy.
- Encourage business service providers (e.g., converters, waste managers) to recognize that recycling is a viable business opportunity.
- Encourage academic research into recycling, especially innovative technologies.
- Raise support for specific legislation encouraging recycling.
- Work more effectively with regulatory agencies.

II. Target Audiences

Primary

- Public and private lenders/investment community.
- Elected officials and policy makers (at all levels).
- Economic development agencies (at all levels).

Secondary

- Press (at all levels).
- Business and trade associations.
- Entrepreneurs (potential and current).
- General public.
- Universities.
- State-appointed task forces and non-profit organization boards.
- Office of the Federal Environmental Executive/Council on Environmental Quality.
- National Institute of Standards and Technologies/Manufacturing Extension Partnerships.
- U.S. Department of Energy.
- Chambers of commerce.
- Unions.
- Local planners.
- Recycling industry.

III. Information Disseminators

Primary

- Business and trade associations.
- U.S. Department of Commerce.
- News organizations (e.g., *Wall Street Journal*, *Paul Harvey*).

Secondary

- America Recycles Day.
- Economic development offices (e.g., American Economic Development Council).
- Health, environment, and energy offices.
- EPA
- NRC/State Recycling Organizations.
- JTR community.
- Recycling industry (collectors, processors, end users).
- Grassroots local recyclers.
- Non-profit organizations (e.g., WorldWatch Institute, Environmental Defense Fund).
- Industry associations (e.g., Steel Recycling Institute, American Plastics Council, Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, American Forest & Paper Association)
- National Council of State Legislators/Environmental Council of the States .

- Small business associations.
- Bankers association.
- Manufacturing Extension Partnerships.
- Ad Council.
- Congressional environmental committee.
- Leagues of municipalities.
- Socially responsible investors.

IV. Key Messages

Primary

- Recycling is stable, mainstream, benefits the environment, and includes diverse industries.
- Recycling creates jobs, adds value to the economy, and offers high wages.
- Recycling means business and innovation.
- There is room for sustainable growth in recycling.

Secondary

- General:
 - Your actions are creating positive results.
 - Highlight the benefits of recycling versus disposal.
 - Recycling is worth the time and public investment.
- Decision makers: Support JTR and recycling market development.
- Manufacturers: Be proud and promote the recycled content of your products.

V. Potential Activities or Products

Activities

- Raise awareness during America Recycles Day and upcoming investment forums.
- Speak at upcoming conferences (e.g., League of Municipalities, SWANA).
- Conduct advertising/public relations, possibly through the Ad Council.
- Develop articles for targeted publications (e.g., NCSL magazine).
- Hold a press briefing/event.
- Provide information via the JTR Web site and other Web pages (e.g., NRC) with links.
- Attend magazine/publication editorial board meetings.
- Attend trade association meetings.
- Sponsor a focus group with other stakeholders/target audiences to gather additional information.
- Provide legislative testimony.

Products

- Executive summary.
- Case studies.

- Press release and media kit.
- Video.
- Standard PowerPoint presentation.
- Satellite Forum (e.g., WasteWise, BRBA).
- TV segment (e.g., history channel, learning channel).
- GIS mapping.

VI. Upcoming Venues

Name	Date/Location
National Recycling Coalition 1727 King St. Suite 105 Alexandria, VA 22314 Phone: 703 683-9025 Fax: 703 683-9026 Web site: www.nrc-recycle.org	September 30 - October 3, 2001 Seattle, Washington
National Conference of State Legislators 444 North Capitol Street, NW. Suite 515 Washington, DC 20001 Phone: 202 624-5400 Fax: 202 737-1069 Web site: www.ncsl.org	August 11 - 15, 2001 San Antonio, TX
American Bankers Association 1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW. Washington, DC 20036 Phone: 800-226-5377 Web site: www.aba.com	September 30 - October 3, 2001 Palm Desert, CA
SWANA P.O. Box 7219 Silver Spring, MD 20907-7219 Phone: 800 467-9262 Fax: 301 589-7068 E-mail: info@swana.org Web site: www.swana.org	October 15 - 18, 2001 Baltimore, MD
Environmental Council of the States 444 North Capitol Street, NW. Suite 305 Washington, DC 20001 Phone: 202 624 3660 Web site: www.sso.org/ecos	August 26 - 28, 2001 Honolulu, HI

American Economic Development Council 1030 Higgins Road, Suite 301 Park Ridge, IL 60068 Phone: 847 692-9944 Fax: 847 696-2990 E-mail: aedc@aedc.org Web site: www.aedc.org	April 21 - 23, 2002 St. Louis, Missouri
Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries 1325 G Street, NW. Suite 1000 Washington, DC 20005-3104 Phone: 202 737-1770 Fax: 202 626-0900 E-mail: isri@isri.org Web site: www.isri.org	March 10 -14, 2002 Las Vegas, NV
WasteExpo Environmental Industry Associations 4301 Connecticut Avenue, NW. Suite 300 Washington, DC 20008 Phone: 202 244-4700 Fax: 202 966-4818 Web site: www.envans.org	May 20 -23, 2002 Las Vegas, NV
National Governor's Association Hall of States 444 North Capitol Street Washington, DC 20001-1512 Phone: 202 624-5300 Web site: www.nga.org	TBD
Beneficial Use of Recycled Materials in Transportation Applications	TBD
National Association of State Development Agencies 750 First Street, NE., Suite 710 Washington, DC 20002 Phone: 202 898-1302 Web site: www.nasda.com	Offer numerous national meetings
State Economic Development Agency Conferences	TBD
Investment Forums	TBD
State Fairs	TBD

VII. Potential Measures of Success

- Quantitative impacts - behavior changes.
- Stories carried.
- Attendance at conferences/events.
- Future reports.
- Increased interaction with stakeholders.
- Endorsement by trade associations.
- Legislation that supports recycling industries.
- Increased funding for recycling.
- Recycling businesses sited/expanded.
- Relaxed zoning codes.
- Recycling included in economic development plans.
- Institutionalization of an entity within a state to work on RMD.

VIII. Potential Next Steps

- Establish a National Working Group to coordinate plans for communications and outreach. Initial volunteers include Wayne Gjerde (Minnesota), Sarah Carney (Indiana), John Leigh (NERC), and MACRO.
- Establish a clearinghouse of outreach materials on the JTR Web site with links to NRC and related sites.
- Develop a tool kit of resources (e.g., sample press release, fact sheets) to assist states and other stakeholders with outreach.
- Begin planning for sessions/events at the upcoming NRC conference. Possible sessions include a general introduction to the study as well as a more in-depth planning session to disseminate and discuss the tool kit.
- Pursue an event during America Recycles Day (November 15th).
- Pursue an event hosted by senior officials at EPA and DOC, possibly including the EPA Administrator and DOC Secretary.

IX. Summary of State Activities

NERC	Results have been available since 2000. Have established a committee to develop a communications plan, including an outreach tool kit on the NERC Web site. The tool kit might include a sample press release, highlights from the study, state-specific information. Also planning to develop outreach tools for different audiences. Outreach will target local outlets through newspaper articles, Web sites, and business and trade associations. Outreach will focus on individual business stories (e.g., innovative products and technologies) rather than the study itself.
California	At a critical stage since the state's loan funds expire at the end of 2002. Interested in using the results of the study to gain support for RMD and change the minds of people with the wrong perceptions about recycling including investors, private banks, and public lending sources. May develop materials targeting the press.

Indiana	Currently evaluating the various options for outreach. Considering targeting legislators. Want to involve local economic development organizations and convey a message at the local level.
Iowa	Conducted outreach in 1998 to promote Iowa's economic impact study. Efforts were unsuccessful because the campaign "preached to the choir" and wasn't widely circulated. The state put together a focus group of 10 people with representatives from the business community and recycling industry to help guide future efforts.
MACRO	Developed a subcommittee to meet and promote results of the MACRO-specific REI study.
Maine	Compared the recycling industry to all of the other industries in state which was an effective strategy.
Massachusetts (Chelsea Center)	Writing an op-ed piece for the <i>Boston Globe</i> . Inviting interested manufacturers to send out a press release with cover letter to area media contacts.
Minnesota	As part of America Recycles Day in 2000, tied the data on recycling's economic impact to new recycled-content products and industries in the state. Resulted in positive coverage.
Nebraska	Currently developing a communications strategy (received REI data in May). May include a recycling summit and quotes from a national source (e.g., <i>Wall Street Journal</i>) to validate the information. May also include comparisons to the 6 industry groups identified through a recent study by the Nebraska's Department of Commerce. May also target social and green investing firms.
North Carolina	Completed a business assessment study in 1994 and made presentations to the state's small business technology center, legislators, and others. The concepts became part of North Carolina's overall economic development plan and ultimately led to legislation which established permanent funding for the Recycling Business Assistance Center.
Ohio	Developed a brochure comparing Ohio to other states. Outreach follows a three tier process: state legislature (to seek a funding increase), local legislators (to demonstrate that past efforts have been worthwhile), and local programs (to build local support for the program).
Pennsylvania	Developed press information around where the state stands relative to other states. Has issued press releases and included articles in its internal news letter. The state legislature was the primary audience.
Vermont	Worked with the agency press office to develop a media strategy. Recommends tailoring public relations information to the local level. For example, when developing a press release, feature a local business and then describe how the business is part of a larger contribution that recycling makes to the economy.
EPA	Suggested using the data from the study as a background information source so the agency will be better prepared in the future when contacted by the press.